

Increasing Contraception Access to Adolescents and Youth Through Pharmacies

Pharmacies offer convenient working hours and ease of access to contraceptive methods to adolescents and youth. However, to be effective the pharmacies must offer quality services and linkage to public and private facilities. This approach builds pharmacist capacity to provide accurate information and serve an effective point of referral.

Key Outcomes of Engaging Pharmacies

- Engage pharmacies into a formal channel to improve access of contraception and counseling on correct use with a focus on adolescents and youth
- Establish effective referral mechanism
- Expand scope of service and method mix, such as provision of injectables*
- Record and report data, which can support contraception uptake evaluation
- Establish partnerships between government, stakeholders and pharmacies

* Consult country policies and guidelines, as these vary throughout the region



Steps

1

Identify potential stakeholders

in the public and private sector including pharmacy councils, pharmaceutical associations, and pharmacy schools to work in collaboration with RH and AYSRH country staff to effectively engage pharmacies.

2

Map and assess the pharmacies

who meet the basic criteria and are willing to be part of the initiative. Conduct a pharmacy visit to assess capacity and ability to sustain community's need for services. Once key pharmacies are identified, develop an engagement framework for shared understanding of roles and responsibilities.

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1. Licensed pharmacist available
2. Stock at least 5 contraception methods
3. Willing to counsel clients using provided counselling material
4. Able to record and report data
5. Provide referral to clients

3

Provide pharmacy training and education

on family planning and youth-friendly services for relevant pharmacy staff. The trainings should include guidance on how to:

- Counsel and communicate with youth about modern contraceptive methods, including emergency contraceptives, dual protection and sexually transmitted infections;
- Establish an active referral system for clients seeking contraceptives; and
- Record and report on:
 - the number and age of clients counseled on family planning methods
 - sales of over the counter contraceptives
 - clients referred to TCI-supported health facilities

4

Establish referral system

whereby pharmacists refer clients to the closest TCI-supported health facility to track effectiveness and follow-on care related to provision of contraceptive services.

5

Provide IEC materials and job aids

that are youth-oriented. Consider branding the pharmacies.

6

Conduct onsite visits

to pharmacies to evaluate the quality of service provision and build their capacity.

7

Monitor and evaluate

the documentation, reporting performance, and referral systems of each pharmacy on a quarterly basis in line with the MOH policies and procedures. Pharmacy partners can also help identify best practices and provide insight on how to improve reach to adolescents and youth. Discuss outcomes of clients who were referred to and accessed TCI-supported health facilities.

Useful Tips

- Youth outreach workers can act as a link between young adults who may have health questions and the services being provided by pharmacies with trained personnel.
- Program Implementation Team (PIT) members are best-positioned to collaborate with pharmacy stakeholders in order to identify local needs, set priorities, and develop an action plan that will advance contraception access and connection to the community.
- Local and regional pharmacy organizations can help identify which pharmacies in a specific area have the highest capacity and willingness to provide contraception services. They can also provide introductions to leaders of these pharmacies.